ON THE REVIEWER'S TABLE

The Cords of Vanity.

By James Branch Cabell. Doubleday, Page & Co., of New York. $1.50.

It is hardly considered the proper thing to comment upon the outside of a book before the quality of its contents have been discussed and properly dissected, yet the unusualness of the cover design in "The Cords of Vanity," and the fact that the reminiscent attitude of the man on it encircled by the faces which his fancy recalls strikes the keynote of the book, render its mention possibly excusable. The frontispiece follows out the line of that presented in the cover design and heightens its impression.

The book is the second novel of modern American life published by Mr. Cabell, and succeeds in this respect "The Eagle's Shadow." Williamsburg, Va., furnishes its partial background, the book being dedicated to Gabriella Brooke Moncure, daughter of Dr. James D. Moncure, of Williamsburg, who now has her home in Washington, and a number of Williamsburg people presumably furnishing originals for its characters.

The story is told in the first person, that person being called Robert Ethredge Townsend, occupying the centre of the book stage, and enjoying the effect of the tragio-comic atmosphere he creates to the utmost.

His self-told history goes back to the beginning, as the nursery tales say. As Mr. Cabell describes Robert Ethredge Townsend, he is frankly and altogether pagan. Whatever he desires in life, whether it be a flower or a heart, he plucks it for his buttonhole or wears it on his sleeve, and casts it away when its first freshness or power to please is gone. His existence is so lightly breathed that he seems to float almost on the surface of its sea of feeling and emotion, to stand aloof with light, mocking smile from the anxieties and heartburnings and troubles that are the common birthright of humanity. But every now and then the mask hiding realities slips awry, and beneath the painted smile one sees the tragedy which, when the mask is set straight again is covered quite carefully and entirely.

The mask-wearer begins his flirtations when a boy at college, where the one steadfast comradeship of his life also begins in his association with Betty Hamlyn. Beside Betty there are Sylvia and Dorothy and a score of others, only mentioned to be forgotten by the hero and the reader, through the light impression they make on both. There are other affaires du coeur in which Bobbie Townsend figures that are not so readily overlooked.

His first love is named Stella and only Stella, according to Mr. Cabell, until she marries Peter Blagden, whom she loves in her turn, having refused to consider Bobbie. Nursing his disappointment, yet gathering consolation wherever it might be found, the rejected suitor goes abroad, grows while absent from boyhood into manhood and has adventures in plenty. After awhile he faces himself, comes home again and finds Stella, soon after he arrives. She is still a little white and gold piece of vanity, but there is always sympathy between these two. Stella confides in Bobbie and tells him that she has cured her Peter of dissipation and is fast making a great lawyer out of him. And Bobbie listens and applauds. Then comes an April afternoon when Stella's horses run away and she is hurt unto death. Peter is nowhere to be found until Bobbie is sent for, and discovers him in hiding and disgracefully drunk. Thereupon Bobbie goes back to the dying girl-wife and, by a cleverly told lie about her husband being called from Washington to the West on an important case and his being out of the reach of telegrams, he helps her to sing her nunc dimittis and meet death bravely, secure in the belief of what she has done for Peter. "Somehow," she says, "I am sure I shall be told about it when he is a power in the world—a power for good as he will be—and then I shall be very glad, because I helped him, just a trifle."

There are other incidents and other affairs in the book, some purely humorous, some sad, some good, others bad, but none so genuine, so lasting and so full of fresh, unspoiled sentiment as this—nothing except what Bobbie feels for Betty Hamlyn. When his career out in the world and unshackled by collegiate responsibilities begins, he takes leave of Betty in her rose garden before he starts. She goes with him, a subconscious presence, wherever his wanderings lead him. First, last and always, however far his vagrant fancy flies, it comes back to the thought of this steadfast influence, dominating and controlling and setting him squarely at issue with himself.

She is the woman he asks to marry him in the end, but, characteristic to the last, he begs from her a holiday, so that he may put away youthful frivolity, and then spends it in going to put daffodils on Stella Blagden's grave. And as he scatters his flowers, he says to himself: "The woman who lies here was a stranger to me. I did not know her. I knew that her eyes were blue, that her hair was sunlight and that her voice had certain pleasing modulations; but I did not know the woman. And she cared nothing for me. I have brought her daffodils, because of all flowers she loved them chiefly, because they are the flowers of spring and are all white and gold, as she was when we buried her. The dust here clad a brave heart at one time, but we thought of it—and I among the rest—as only a costly plaything with which some lucky man might while away his leisure hours. I believe now it was something more. I believe—ah, well, my credo is of little consequence."

But he enunciates his credo very clearly a little later, and at the very last, when, hesitating as to whether or not he should present a blurred chapter of his life for Betty's inspection, he says: "For it would make her so unhappy; and never have I been able to endure the contact of unhappiness."

And what is this but pagan philosophy?

The Glory of the Conquered.

By Susan Glaspell. Frederick A. Stokes Company, of New York, publishers. $1.50.

To many readers of fiction who are depressed by problem love stories with unpleasant incidents this book will come as an illumination and a strengthener of faith grown weak.

The majority of novel writers in America at the present day swing clear of sentiment and exploit a cheap cynicism in its stead. Miss Glaspell departs altogether from this usage and calls her book in the sub-title, "The Story of a Great Love." The cover design and frontispiece of the book are reproductions of Mercie's famous "Gloria Victis," which, perhaps, better than anything else, should furnish a key to the purpose and meaning of what Miss Glaspell has written, and written so well.

The hero and heroine of "The Story of a Great Love" were a famous scientist, Karl Ludwig Hubers, associated with the Chicago University, and his artist wife, Ernestine. Except these two, who are splendid types of humanity, the one other character in the book that must be taken into account is Dr. Murray Parkman, an eminent Chicago surgeon, and a great friend of the husband and wife.

Karl and Ernestine started together with a holiday of a year and a half when they were married, and spent it abroad, where both had abundant opportunity to gratify their scientific and artistic instincts and enjoy their honeymoon as well. This holiday time was in its experience something for them to be always thankful for, and yet, when the home-coming time called them back to Chicago, both husband and wife were eager to begin the work which awaited them there.

To the man, of course, the call of his work was the more compelling, for his was the burden of the thinker and scholar, and adding to thought and scholarship the instinct of the fighter. Both settled into their home with the things they most needed and valued around them. Both fitted into their appointed spheres of useful and important grooves of occupation, realizing at each day's end the closer bond of sympathy and tenderness in union. When they dreamed of the future the dream was "of growing old together; of taking from life everything there was together; of achieving to the uttermost; of rejoicing in each other's victories, growing more and more close together; of giving up some things as the changing years did their work, and taking on other things, finer things that come with the years; of walking together down the years and meeting them gladly, fearlessly, in the thought that they but added to the fulness of their love."

A beautiful dream for a pair of wedded lovers to indulge in. But instead of its fulfilment came grief and pain and suffering, and last, worst of all, separation and death. Their glory was indeed "The Glory of the Conquered," a glory in which the wonder of a great love alone transcended sorrow and tragedy and blindness, and brought understanding, victory and peace.

Of the two workers, the one was taken and the other left, but the one that was left worked on and, in what she achieved, glorified and immortalized the supreme love which had given light to eyes in darkness, truth to the man of science, and perfect understanding to a human soul faring forth alone on its last great journey. And in so doing the joy which was uplift, the knowledge which was glory, was perpetuated everlastingly.

The Ring and The Man.

By Cyrus Townsend Brady. Moffat, Yard & Co., of New York. $1.50.

The first chapter of this book is so virile and full of interest that, while the remainder of the book is a clean, clear cut modern American romance, in which a man of very remarkable personality determines to accomplish something that will render him worthy of the love of a woman to whom he has given his heart, and that will break the power of a ring of grafters, in whose grasp the city of New York is held helpless and prostrate.

The man has splendid fighting qualities, and unlimited money to aid him in his struggle for the mayoralty of New York. There is just one closed episode in his life, the one told in the first chapter, and relating to his career before he came to New York, that he regrets and is ashamed of. Otherwise he has fought his way upward through the pluck and audacity of the born genius in financiering, but his road to success has been based on honesty and fairness and a determination to do right toward all classes of humanity. Of course, his enemies in the ring found out his weak spot, and tried their utmost to use it against him to his injury and their advantage. But the customary good luck of the man, in addition to a fortunate development of circumstances in his favor brought him again on top, gave him the mayoralty, and, better still, the fair lady of his choice.

While the story is innocent of plot, and is unashamedly practical and unproblematic, it is written in Mr. Brady's accustomed vigorous style, and is full of interest. Certainly the reform note can be sounded as strongly in fiction as elsewhere, when such a writer wields the pen.

Journal of a Neglected Wife.

By Mabel Herbert Urner. B. W. Dodge & Co., of New York. $1.10.

This book, published serially and in book form, has been greatly heralded as making for sensation and putting its author at once on a pedestal.

The book is written in diary form, and purports to embody the experiences of a wife who has been married long enough to be gray-headed. It contains also the experiences of other wives, who make her their confidantes and pour into her evidently willing ears accounts of what they have endured at the hands of their husbands.

While every book has, or ought to be supposed to have a purpose, the only one that could be devised for "The Journal of a Neglected Wife" is the gratification of a morbid curiosity on the part of women who read fiction for a delight they have in giving themselves misery unnecessarily. The book is not in any way true to life, nor does it describe circumstances likely to happen to the average man and woman who are growing old together in marriage.

Granting that anything so unlikely as the things Mrs. Urner has gited in her book should ever come to pass, what possible benefit does the world gain by their exploitation in a novel? It would seem that the American woman of the present day had grown to be too emancipated to consider such a form of romance.

But Still a Man.

By Margaret L. Knapp. Little, Brown & Co., of Boston. $1.50.

The title of this book is taken from a line by Pope, "A minister—but still a man," and the line is descriptive of the story. A young man, a graduate of a theological school, enters upon his first charge in a small New England village. The problems that he encounters and the way he disposes of them are written of in a very interesting and original way. The characterization of the village types is clever, particularly in the case of Dr. Kent and Shirley De Forest.

The hero of the book, Gordon Dale by name, reaches up to the full measure of strength and usefulness as a minister when he learns that the one thing needful to create the kingdom of heaven on earth is not wisdom, or righteousness even, but love.

The climax of the story is reached in its ending, which is dramatically told.

Good Health, and How We Won It.

By Upton Sinclair and Michael Williams. Frederick A. Stokes Company, of New York, through the Bell Book and Stationery Company, of Richmond.

The same simplicity, vigor and directness which have rendered Upton Sinclair's name famous heretofore go into the make-up of this last piece of literary work with which it is associated. The introduction shows the purpose with which the book has been written. It tells the reader how to eat according to Horace Fletcher's gospel of dietetics, refers to the Yale experiments, explains how digestion is accomplished, how foods poison the body, gives advice as to how often food should be taken, as to breathing and exercise, and finishes with a description of the Health University, at Battle Creek Sanatorium. The book is well illustrated and excellent of its kind.

The Philosophy of Self Help.

By Stanton Davis Kirkham. G. P. Putnam's Sons, of New York. $1.25.

This volume is designed to show how, by a training and use of the mind, it is possible for every one to secure at least a large measure of mental health and physical well-being. Mr. Kirkham's work distances its competitors in the field by combining certain qualities which are the condition of excellence and practical serviceableness in the chosen sphere of this book: it is firmly founded upon a rock of philosophy; the author's sanity and common sense banish all extreme and fantastic claims that fly in the face of reason and experience; the thought is reduced to the simplest form, and is free from technical terms; the ideas are easily grasped and put into practice; and there is an extraordinary lucidity, directness and vigor in style, structure and manner of presentation.

The Federal Civil Service as a Career.

By El Bie Kean Foltz. G. P. Putnam's Sons, of New York. $1.50.

The young man aspiring to success in the Federal civil service has not been provided, up to the present, with a single book giving him practical information on the workings of the governmental machinery. "The Federal Civil Service as a Career" is designed for the applicant for Federal positions, the office-holder, the economist, and the busy citizen. It is a book of facts, concisely stated, free from technicalities, and arranged with a view to practical use. Any one ambitious of entering the Federal civil service will find this book of value in preparing for examination; a study of the chapters on the merit system, preparation, examination and appointment cannot fail to be of value in securing a desirable appointment. The chapters on salaries, promotions and planning a career are of especial use to the new appointee.

A History of German Literature.

By Calvin Thomas, LL. D., of Columbia University. D. Appleton & Company, of New York. $1.50.

The author of this important work takes up the history of German literature with the year 800, and deals with it in its beginnings as the legacy of paganism. The consideration of the earliest religious poetry comes next, preceding the transition from monasticism to chivalry, and thence to the indigenous epic of the middle ages. The exotic romances of knighthood follow, the period of the minnesingers untedating the age of expiring chivalry and the days of the Lutheran revolt. The drama, fiction and satire of the sixteenth century next engage the author's attention, and bring him onward to the early days of the seventeenth century and to Opitz and his train.

German literature during the period between the great wars follows. Then come Klopstock and Wieland, idealist and sensualist, and so on to Lessing and Herder, and then to the young Goethe.

The next and concluding chapters tell of the birth of poetic drama, of the great days of Weimar, of the rise of the romantic school, of the era of romanticism, of the middle nineteenth century period, and of recent developments. A bibliography and complete index render this book additionally valuable for the reader and the student of literature.

The Arizona Limited.

By Michael G. Harman. Southern Publishing Company. $1.25.

This is an account of the manner in which Michael G. Harman, son of State Treasurer A. W. Harman, traveled across the continent on foot in 1904, he having, as he states in his introductory outline, decided to take the little walk from San Francisco to New York, starting with a 3-cent piece in his pocket.

It required 197 days for his trip of 3,710 miles between the two points named. His route took him through thirteen States or Territories—California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. He left San Francisco February 8, 1904, and reached Jersey City December 8 of the same year. The book takes its title from an outfit known as the Arizona Limited Express, which accompanied the pedestrian on his trip and was made up of a covered spring wagon and a team of four donkeys, or burros, as they are called in the West.

Mr. Harman proves himself an exceptional knight of the road in his ability to record his observations of what he saw and the experiences and adventures attendant upon his long tramp. His humorous fancy and his fluent, easy English invest his book with keen interest for the reader, his occasional slang meeting the exigencies calling for vigorous English to forceful purpose.

His closing chapter contains a summing up of facts as to distances daily covered in his trip and sensible advice to pedestrians that are written out of what Mr. Harman knows by personal experience, and must be correspondingly valuable to any one desiring to do as he did, and walk across from the Pacific to the Atlantic slope. The book

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